



THUNDER BAY OPP – APRIL 2019 NEWSLETTER

OPP LAYS MORE THAN 1,500 DISTRACTED DRIVING CHARGES OVER MARCH BREAK

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) were highly visible over the March Break as they sought out and spotted a number of drivers who were holding or using a hand-held electronic device during their Distracted Driving Campaign (March 11-17, 2019).

During the province-wide initiative, the OPP laid a total of **1,508** distracted driving charges. Officers laid an additional **51** distraction-related careless driving charges against drivers who were caught dividing their attention between driving and some other activity that made roads unsafe.

In total, 20 Distracted Driving charges were issued across the North West Region.

So far this year, the OPP has laid over **2,000** distracted driving charges.

The OPP is reminding drivers about the increased distracted driving penalties that took effect on January 1, 2019. The new penalties include a fine increase up to \$1,000, three demerit points and a three-day licence suspension. Novice drivers also face longer licence suspensions under the new laws.

THUNDER BAY OPP FOCUSING ON SEATBELT SAFETY OVER EASTER LONG WEEKEND

OPP Conducts Seat Belt Campaign over Easter Weekend (April 19-April 22, 2019)

With the onset of spring and the Easter long weekend approaching, officers from the Thunder Bay Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and North West Region Highway Safety Division will be patrolling the local highways and roadways targeting aggressive drivers, distracted drivers, impaired drivers and particular focus will be on ensuring seatbelt compliance.

With the onset of spring also brings improved weather and road conditions. OPP want to remind the public about seatbelt safety as many motorists and passengers let their guard down with these improved conditions. Enforcing seat belt usage and other important legislation intended to reduce high risk driving behaviour is part of the solution to keeping the motoring public safe.

The set fine for Failing to Wear a Seatbelt is \$240 plus two demerit points. Seatbelts save lives, wear yours and ensure all passengers are buckled up!



FATALITIES LEAD OPP TO WARN SNOWMOBILERS ABOUT THE HIGH COST OF TAKING RISKS

With two snowmobile deaths in as many days and the arrival of spring, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is urging snowmobilers to avoid taking unnecessary risks, especially on frozen waterways, as their season winds down.

The two tragedies over the weekend (March 22-24, 2019) mark 11 fatal snowmobile incidents and 13 lives lost in OPP jurisdictions so far this season.

The OPP cannot stress enough the importance of avoiding frozen waterways at this time of year for those wanting to get in their 'last few rides'. Five people who died this season were traveling on lakes or rivers when their snowmobile either broke through the ice or was driven into open water. One such case occurred last weekend.

Past investigations into snowmobile incidents reveal that driving onto open water is often the result of two common, costly errors in judgement. One scenario involves a snowmobiler travelling too fast on unsafe ice and having insufficient time to slow down when they suddenly come upon and enter open water.

In the second scenario, the snowmobiler deliberately travels over patches of open water (known as "water skipping" or "puddle jumping") in the misguided belief they can successfully reach the other side.

Excessive speed, driving too fast for the conditions and alcohol/drug impairment continue to be other leading factors in OPP-investigated snowmobile deaths.

The OPP reminds snowmobilers that with warmer temperatures in many parts of the province, riding conditions on waterways and land will deteriorate daily.



SPRING HAS ARRIVED – KEEP SAFE DRIVING IN MIND

Winter may be most known for its treacherous driving conditions, but spring also can be a difficult season for driving. From wind and rain to wildlife emerging from hibernation, spring driving can be challenging in its own right.

It is possible to enjoy the ride, however. By being aware of possible obstacles, increased traffic and tricky weather changes, you can take care when driving to ensure you and your passengers arrive safely and securely.

While you are driving, keep an eye out for pedestrians, especially on warm days. Residential, shopping and recreational areas will have more pedestrians, so it is especially important to be aware of those who are walking.

- Two-wheeled vehicles also increase in popularity in the spring, so keep an eye out for motorcycles and bicycles and share the road. Bicyclists have the same rights as other vehicles on most roads. In particular, watch out for motorcycles and bicycles at intersections and in your blind spots when you are turning, passing or merging.
- Spring is often the time when road work begins or resumes, so expect construction. Pothole repairs, highway maintenance and other road repairs may slow your drive and, quite possibly, tax your patience. Stay calm, slow down and be aware of the conditions around you. Be especially careful driving through work zones. Increase your following distance and avoid distractions.
- If the weather should turn ugly, which has been known to happen in spring, know when you need to pull off the road and seek shelter. If you get caught in severe weather that makes driving hazardous, find a safe place to park until weather conditions improve.
- Likewise, if the weather turns cold and the temperature dips below freezing, icy conditions may make roads slick and driving hazardous. If you do encounter icy roads, reduce your speed and increase your following distance.
- If you are taking a vehicle or trailer out of winter storage, have your mechanic perform regular maintenance, including checking the fluid levels, tire condition, lights, suspension and brakes. Doing so now could help reduce the risk of a breakdown or an accident.
- Deer, bears and other wild animals become more populous in the spring, as the warmer weather brings animals out of hibernation. Be alert for wildlife in the road, and slow down so you can stop safely if animals are on or near the roadway.
- If your spring plans include a road trip, plan your driving route to avoid having to drive late at night. If you are traveling with another licensed driver, take turns behind the wheel to avoid road fatigue and get to your destination safely.



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Spring is a season of renewal, and it also can be a season of fun driving. Stay alert and be prepared to avoid the challenges of spring driving and make the most of the season.

The preceding information was provided by www.travelers.com

THUNDER BAY OPP URGE MOTORISTS TO DRIVE WITH CAUTION DURING THE SPRING THAW

Thunder Bay Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) are urging motorists to drive with extra caution if you come across roadways and highways that are covered or flooded with water.

During the Spring thaw, rainfall, mild temperatures and melting snow can be cause for concern as the ground may still be frozen and the water is not absorbed into the ground.

Avoid driving through flood waters. Find an alternate route

When approaching a flooded area, you can't be sure of the depth of the water or the condition of the road beneath it, which may be broken up or washed away. There may be no road left under the water.

-15 cm (6 inches) of standing water, sometimes less, can be enough to cause engine stalling.

-In 30 cm (1 foot) of water, a typical car can begin to float and, as traction is lost, so is steering control. If the water is moving, your vehicle could literally float away.

-At 60 cm (two feet) of water, larger vehicles such as pickup trucks and SUVs are in danger of floating away.

Never drive through fast-moving water, such as an overflowing river, your vehicle could be swept away.

If you don't know, don't go!



RECEIVE MONEY FROM A SOURCE? WHY WOULD YOU SEND ANY BACK?

Protect Yourself from Cheque Fraud and Money Transfer Scams

Members of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Anti-Rackets Branch, the [Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre](#) (CAFC) and Ontario's Serious Fraud Office (SFO) say money transfer scams extort money and personal information from unwitting victims.

Money transfer and cheque fraud scams are successful for fraudsters because they constantly find ways to put a new spin on an old scam. Victims sometimes educate themselves on a particular type of money transfer or cheque fraud scam only to find out a new version of scam has been created. Typically, individuals use a phone or computer to communicate with you before they offer a financial transaction. Often this serves a dual purpose of providing criminals with access to your banking information and then for you to legitimately send them money. This category of scams may also include offers such as job proposals, fake prizes and foreign money exchanges. According to the CAFC, these types of scams defrauded victims across Canada of approximately \$25 million in 2018.

Investigators find two scenarios are most commonly used. In one version, someone responds to a resume that victims have submitted to a job posting site. Suspects will respond to the resume which generally contains personal information by trying to convince you that your qualifications are '*exactly what they are looking for.*' Conversations lead to a job offer but there will be some form of financial transaction that needs to take place -- such as a prepayment for "professional services." The suspects may also send you money for training or further education, but the amount of money is more than the agreed upon amount. The scammers request the "extra funds" be sent back to them which, of course, is real money. The other amount that was previously-deposited is defaulted by the banking institution. In the end, the money that victims sent is gone. According to the SFO, one particular victim had received a cheque for approximately \$275,000. However, the instructions that accompanied the cheque stated that a five per cent commission be paid, five percent more for taxes and a further \$135,000 be sent back to the so-called employer. Recognized their scam worked, the suspects sent another cheque for more than \$400,000 when the bank advised that the cheques were fraudulent. Unfortunately, when all was said and done, the victim lost approximately \$200,000.

In another common scenario, scammers will respond to an advertisement that has been placed on a buy and sell site. They generally offer you the asking price or more for the item without physically seeing it. The individual will then send a money transfer and request the item to be sent to them. In many cases, the amount will exceed the amount of the asking price. The fraudsters will request to deposit the money and send the excess back to them. After several days, the bank will inform you that the money that was deposited was defaulted and you were scammed of the money you transferred.



TIPS TO PREVENT MONEY TRANSFER FRAUD

- Think twice before uploading your resume to a job posting site that requires your personal information. Once you have had communication with the prospective employer, do research on the company. If possible, physically attend the location to confirm the information. Then, provide your resume to the person in charge of hiring.
- When dealing with online buy-and-sell sites, consider dealing face-to-face with the prospective buyer, pay with cash, and try to deal locally - perhaps at a 'safe trade zone' if available. If the vendor pushes you to electronically transfer money, assume it is a scam.

If you or someone you know suspect they've been a victim of a money transfer scam, contact your local police service. You can also [file a complaint through the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre website](#) or by phone at 1-888-495-8501.

"Recognize, Reject and [Report Fraud](#)"

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATOR APPRECIATION WEEK APRIL 14-20 2019

Who's talking on your radio?

That is one of the many questions that Constable Diana Cole is asked when she attends local schools for a visit.

During the last week of March and first week of April, Constable Cole and a Communications Operator (CO) from the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Provincial Communications Centre (PCC) will be attending Gorham & Ware Public School, McKenzie Public School, Whitefish Valley Public School and Upsala Public School. They will be providing a presentation on the important role of the CO within the OPP. The CO's are a fundamental component of the organization that supports the OPP mandate to maintain public safety and security for Ontario.

The five OPP Provincial Communications Centres (PCCs) in the province receive incoming emergency calls from the public, collect sufficient information and dispatch calls to the appropriate officers. The Communication Centres are staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days each year with French and English speaking members.

April 14 -20 2019 is Emergency Communicator Appreciation Week.



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CRIME STOPPERS

Crime Stoppers look forward to continuing to work with the community on Crime Prevention initiatives. Keep in mind that if you have any information about any crime, we ask that you contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800- 222- TIPS or 623-TIPS or submit a web tip at <http://www.p3tips.com/273>. Remember your identity will remain anonymous and you could be eligible for a reward of up to \$2,000.00 and you will never have to testify in court



April is.....

World Health Day

National Volunteer Week

May is.....

Sexual Assault Prevention Month

National Water Safety Month

Green Ribbon of Hope Campaign

National Summer Safety Week

Ontario Police Memorial Service of Remembrance

Emergency Preparedness Week

Mental Health Week

National Police Week

National Road Safety Week

National Missing Children's Day

Aboriginal Awareness Week

National Safe Boating Awareness Week

Victims and Survivors of Crime Week

Safe Kids Week

If there are other topics you would like addressed in this newsletter or have some ideas, please do not hesitate to call me.

P/C Diana Cole

Thunder Bay OPP Community Safety Officer

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